James
Stanley

A Dyet for the Christian soule, constantlie to be obserued euerie daye, that it may alwayes reioyce in the Lord.

IF th'estate of most of vs bee suruaide: it will be found not far vnlike a very crasie & sickely bodie, which longer then it is ordered by a verie skilfull dyet, is alwayes

out of frame, if not full of paine. Euen so men not knowing or not precisely vsing any Christian direction, for the well ordering of their whole life, are not long in any good temper, but fall into many euils: which the longer they be lyne in, the more hardlie, and with the more griefe will bee cured. The truth hereof will easily appeare.

First

First by looking backe euery one into his life betweene God and his Soule: considering how empty he hath beene of all good graces, and stuffed with manye noysome thoughtes and lustes, and how negligent, vnprofitable and vncomfortable he hath beene in all heauenlie exercises.

Also what neede there is of this direc-

tion will appeare, by cõſidering euery one his open conuerſation before men: how barren he hath beene in all good workes, ſo that few or none, are moued to bleſſe God for him. And on the other ſide, how apparantly his corruption hath broken out as foule ſpots in the face of his profeſsion, to the great diſhonour of God, offence of many, and griefe, or els

els more hurt to his owne soule. As for example.

First, in open loathing of the heauenlye foode.

Secondly, in excessiue delighte in all earthly pleasures.

Thirdly, in immoderate care for earthly commodities.

Fourthly, in open pride.

Fiftly, in couetousnes.

Sixtly, in impacien-

cie: all apparant in word and deede.

All which is greatlie increaſed, for that through deep ſecuritie hee hath not feared, but hath beene ſenceles of this dangerous eſtate.

Theſe thinges being thus, it cannot be denyed, but that it is high wiſedom for all, betimes both to inquire after ſuch a skilful direction, as is approued to be able, as

such as is not grounded aright.

3 To prouoke vs to reuengement.

4 To make vs grudge against our good God, &c.

Now to repel these mighty enimies God hath appointed vs armour, and will alwayes succour vs at our neede, so as wee fight still vnder his banner, calling continually vpon his power, & vsing the means

that are offered vs by his worde.

We may see diuers that haue a good zeal as farre as can be iudged: and yet it shalbe but a blast, it will not continue, and why? Because they bee not fenced against *Satan*, where let vs put on this Armour of God, keeping it on fast, and let vs not hang it on a naile by the wall at any time, for it is certaine we cannot liue

in

in Gods obedience, & keepe the way that hee sheweth vs but by fighting. And if we fight without Armour, what shall become of vs?

This Armour wee find in the sixt Chapter to the *Ephesians*, 14 15.16, and 17.verses. And it is as foloweth.

1 The girdle of veritie.

2 The breast-plate of righteousnesse.

3 The shooes of the

preparation of the Gospel of peace.

4 The thicklde of faith.

5 The helmet of saluation.

6 The sworde of the spirit.

1 By the Girdle of verytie, is ment a soūd heart, whereby the Apostle condemneth all hypocrisie, enioyning vs to giue our selues to the seruing of God, with a free heart, & a right meaning

ning minde.

No marueil though the diuell ouercome vs easily & steale vpō vs all kind of wayes vnawares both Euening and Morning, and euer e minute. For where is this soundnes which the apostle requireth first of all?

2 By the Breastplate of righteousnes is meant an holie life: so as wee should bee resolued to deale vp

rightly in all our actions both before God and man.

3 By the Shooes of the preparation of the Gospell of peace is ment not onelie skil in the Gospel, but also haste and valiancie. We should so take hold of the peace of our God offered in the Gospell, as that we be prepared to indure any hardnesse in the Christian course.

When we are trained

ned in the doctrine of the Gospel, as wee ought to be, then we maye walke safelye through the worlde, whileſt we see the vnbeleeuers snarled in the world, and with pleasures and profits plunged ouer heade and eares in it, sinking themselues daily deeper and deeper in it.

For vs there is but one onelie way to make vs wade thorough this worlde,

and to attaine to the kingdom of heauen which is to haue such instruction as is in the Gospel, namely, that God hauing adopted vs freely to bee his children, will not haue vs to dwel here beneath for euer, but that we should come vnto him, yea, euen with all haſt & ſpeed. For wee are borne to an heauenly life.

And if wee refuſe not the ſuccour that our

our God giueth vs, but rather make it effectuall, by enforcing our selues to withstand all euill, we shall haue peace in the midst of warre. And why? For the Gospel is the gospel of peace

This peace indeed doth not discharge vs of all care: yet this Christian care which wee ought to haue shall bee no impediment, but that wee enter into the bui[l]

freely with a ſteddie and well ſetled mind. For as much as God is on our ſide, and will vtter his mightie power in our defence, which conſideration ought to make vs quiet, ſo as no ſuch feare attach vs, as may make vs turne head, or ſo diſfurniſh vs of aduiſe, but that the more we be pinched, the more we flie vnto our good God. Thus our care driueth vs to prayer,

prayer, that wee might crye strongly to our God to succour vs, and to prouide for all our needs which hee knoweth much better then we our selues do.

This is to be shod with the Gospell of peace.

4 By the shield of Faith is ment: Grace to apprie the promises as a shield for our defence

defence, that so wee may finde our hearts comfortably perswaded of the truth of Gods promises vnto vs, assuring our selues wee shall reach from the Lord all grace to help in time of need.

Faith and Gods word haue such relation one to the other, as they cannot bee sundered: for faith is nothing of it selfe further forth, then it is groun-

grounded vpō Gods worde. And Gods worde also profiteth vs not, except we receiue it by faith.

Faith thus grounded, hath for the obiect thereof our Lord Iesus Christ, and it is the onely meane wee haue to fetch power from God to bee preserued from Sathan

This faith is our shield: whosoeuer shal make themselues shields

ſhieldes of any other thing that can be deuiſed, to repulſe Sathan withal, they ſhal haue but a Spiders web, and Sathan will but ſport himſelfe at ſuch preſumption: wherfore let vs learne to make faith our buckler, that is to ſay, when wee minde to enter into the battell, and to hold out in it: Let vs conſider, that God is our father, becauſe

cause he hath elected and chosen vs for his children, of his owne infinit goodnes. Seeing he hath assured vs that hé will alwayes bee on our side, and that he is greater then al the world, and that hee hath put vs in good and safe keeping, by ordaining our Lord Iesus Christ to be our sheepherd: Let vs gather all those promises togither, & make

make a ſhield of them to ſet before vs when ſoeuer we be aſſailed, and let vs defie the diuell, becauſe we be in the protection of our God, who is of inuincible power, and becauſe our Lorde Ieſus Chriſt hath taken vpon him the charge of our ſaluation, and promiſed to bee a faithful keeper of our ſoules, to the ende.

1 If we bee tempted

ted with couetousnesse, because wee bee afrayde least the earth should faile vs: let vs remember God hath taken vpon him the charge to nourish and sustaine vs. And therefore let vs rest vpon him, and aske our daily bread at his hands.

2 If the diuell labour to winne vs to whordome, let vs call to

to minde howe Ieſus Chriſt hath incorporated vs into himſelfe, and made vs his owne members to be all one with him. And ſhall we go rent our ſelues frō Chriſt, to make our ſelues the members of a filthie Harlot? God forbid.

3 Are we prouoked to gluttonie? And why not? Hath not God

God created victuals to our vse? Yes: But should we defile and ouerthrow the order that God hath set, which is, that wee should bee sustained by them, thereby to bee directed to the heauenly life? And shall wee turne the thing to our hinderance that ought to be our helpe.

4 Againe, we are temp-

tempted with ambitition to glorifie our our ſelues? yea, but what example hath our lord Ieſus Chriſt ſet before vs? Howe lowly? how meckely did he beare himſelfe? Moreouer, if we couet to be great inthis worlde, wee ſhall bee enemies to God, for hee reſiſteth the proud ſo, as their pride and preſumption muſt needes be pulled

pulled downe. Thus may wee euerie way beate backe the darts of Sathan by faith.

5 By the Helmet of saluation is ment our constant hope, to enioy in due time whatsoeuer GOD hath promised, and therefore with boldnesse wee lift vp our heades agaynst all our enemies, looking for the full victorie vnto saluation.

6 By

6 By the ſword of the ſpirit, is ment, the worde of God: and let vs aſſure our ſelues that we haue a good ſword, when wee can skill to applie Gods woorde to our vſe. And (as aboue is ſhewed) let vs aſſure our ſelues that wee haue a good ſhielde, when we haue fayth which proceedeth out of the worde of God.

Now

Nowe Christian Reader, that thou maist keepe this Armour fast vpon thee, haue care to practize these rules following.

1 His first care in the morning must be that presently after rest, before the mynd be intangled with other thoughtes, affections and cares, he awake with God, and therefore that he suffer not his mynd before

fore meditation and prayer, to be wandering after the worlde which is founde a greate quencher of grace the whole day after.

But rather that he ſtirre vp the grace of God in him, by thinking on ſuch heuenly matters, as bee moſt fit for the ſame.

As Firſt, that ſhortly he muſt lie downe in the duſt, and part with whatſoeuer delight

light he doth heere enioy; that this may breede in him a contempt of the worlde, and a longing after the life to come.

Secondly, that he consider, to what great preferment hee is come by beeing Gods childe, that by the comfortable sight of this high prerogatiue, hee may cheere vp his hart to all holy dueties to God and man: resoluinge to deale

deal (without fraud) religiouſly and ſimply.

Thirdly, alſo that hee conſider his late preſeruation and other mercies receyued from God with thankefull remembraunce of all, both earthlie and (moſt eſpecially) heauenlye bleſsinges.

Theſe meditations ended, hee is in the feare of God to addreſſe himſelfe to offer

fer vp vnto God his morning sacrifice of prayer, in such sorte as may be accepted, taking heed that in any case his prayer be hearty: and therein these three principall partes are to bee remembred.

First, Gods mercies bodilie, and spirituall, with heartie thankes for the same.

Secondly, his sins, with harty desire of pardon for them.

Thirdly

Thirdlie, his neceſſities both of bodie and ſoule, with feruent requeſt to be relieued in all, both for himſelf, and others, ſo particularly as conueniently may be.

Secondlie, hee is to watche ouer his thoughts, words and deeds al the day, that euill may be kept out of them, preuenting the occaſion and tentation to euill. And for ſuch ſins wherunto

to hee is more prone then to others, hee must haue more care to auoide them, and the prouocations, that were wont most to preuaile against him: oftner thinking on the foulenesse of those sinnes, & weying the reasons that should kindle in him a detestation of them, vsing all lawful remedies against them: And not to enterprise

priſe any kind of buſineſſe whatſoeuer, without hearty prayer to GOD in the name of Ieſus Chriſt for the obtayning of his holy Spirite and mercifull protection.

Alſo hee is to obſerue howe ſinne dyeth and is weakened in him, and muſt bee carefull to ſhun one ſinne as well as another, and muſt delight in the worde and worſhip of God, and

and in the fellowship of his *S*aintes, and mourne and striue against his sinnes, renewing his couenant with GOD for that end.

This watchfulnes and care will bee found no more then needefull, if we consider,

First, among how many occasions and prouocations wee walke.

Secondlie, howe shiftles

ſhiftles wee are to auoide them.

Thirdly, how our luſtes and ill affections carry vs head long vnto euill: ſo as we go about nothing but ſome one or other of them is in our way to moleſt vs.

Fourthly, the great hurt that many godly minded haue taken for wante of this watchfulnes, as *Eue*, *Noah*, *Dauid*, &c.

A little diligent practiſe

practise will so fill his heart with peace of conscience (which is more of all true christians desired then any gaine) that the labour will bee most pleasaunt, sweete, delightfull and easie.

3 Thirdly hee is faithfully and diligently to follow his lawfull calling, yet so that his diligence bee no let from the seruice of God, and practising the helpes in this

this direction ſette downe. For we muſt ſo play the good huſbandes, that wee become not worldelings: and ſo we muſt looke to our buſines, as we bee not careles of our brothers good Wee muſt vſe the world as though wee vſed it not, not lifting vp our heartes when wee proſper; nor caſting them downe when we are croſſed. And thus will the diligent

as are able to enform him, and as often as hee may, to seeke opportunitie to confer with such as feare God, that hee may both doe and receiue good. As the coales of fire lying together do yeeld more heate and endure longer: so the seruantes of God receiue mutual comfort one of another: and doe by their mutuall loue declare indeed, that

they are Gods children, *1. Iohn, 3. 13. 14. Maruell not my Brethren though the world hate you; wee know that wee are translated from death vnto life, because wee loue the Brethren, and hee that loueth not his Brother abideth in death.* In which blessed sentence, note both an euident marke of the childe of God, and the reprobate. The Childe of God loueth Gods Children:

dren: the reprobate worldlinge hateth Gods children.

7 When at anie time he findeth himselfe to haue failed in his dutie to God: he must take heede that hee neyther make sleight reckoning of it, which hardeneth the hart: nor yet that he too deeply be cast downe by it, which much discourageth a poor distressed soule from comfortable

proceeding, but rather ſpeedilie to reconcile himſelfe to God, and ſo recouering himſelfe to bee made more circumſpect by his fall.

§ He is to take heed that al theſe duties be not made matters of courſe and cuſtome, without care to grow better thereby: for this is the ſubtiltie of Sathan, to make men thinke, when they haue performed outward

ward obedience, it sufficeth. God is a spirite, and therefore must be worshipped hartilie and in truth.

9 Hee is also to obserue Gods blessings and chastisementes, that by both, his hart may bee drawne to thanks and requests, that so all the daye as it were hee maye walke with his gracious God.

10 He is to looke well to his carriage in

company, that he do no hurt by worde or example, nor take anie from others: but cõtrariwise endeuor rather to do good. If all the company bee not of one mind, &c. then hee is to wait for fitte occasion from their talke, to vtter somewhat wisely to th'holding out of vnsauorie talke, that attendance may be giuen to better, being wisely and kindly offered

fered. And to this purpose before hee go into company, he is to thinke of some matter that may bee profitable for the company to which hee goeth. Without this care it is better to attend vppon familie and charge at home, then to frequente company. If the cõpany be scornefull or brutish, so as hee can haue none oportunity to do good.

First, hee is not to ioyne with them in their idle talke, but to shew apparant dislike of it, by silence, countenance, &c.

Secondly, he is to break off company as soone as may be.

If hee light vpon such as thinke it an ouercharging of them alwayes to be held to this cõmunication, he must haue regard of their weaknes, and must bring them on so

so as he may best preuaile with them. But not to make them think that there is no talke allowed but of Scripture, when as it cannot bee denide, but men may talke of their trades, howe to grow to more skill in them, &c. When hee commeth in company, to deale about his affairs, or other mens matters, when iust occasion shall drawe him thereto, he must

ſo carrie himſelfe as may be ſutable to the other parts of his life, that there be no bricking of his peace with GOD, taking heede that he do not in any euill follow the faſhion of other men.

He is alſo in company to auoid as rocks, thoſe common ſins againſt the third and ninth commaundements. Let not God or any word or work of his bee once mentioned

tioned but with reuerent feare. Let not any man bee named but with loue, remembring that roiall Law, *Whatsoeuer men should doe vnto you doe you the same vnto thē.* Waying well these holy sentences of the 119. Psal. 53. *Feare is come vppon mee for the wicked that forsake thy law.* 63. *I am companion of all them that feare thee, and keepe thy precepts.* 97. *Oh how loue*

I thy law: it is my meditation continually. 139. Mine eies gush out with riuers of water, because they keepe not thy Law. 155. Saluation is farre from the wicked, because they seeke not thy statutes 158. I saw the transgressors, and was grieued because they kept not thy word. The sweet and blessed spirite of GOD write these sentences in our hearts, that wee may Christianly behaue our

as well in regarde of health, as also behauiour, which makes mee the more willing to describe it, for all mens easier apprehension.

When the stomacke or *ventricle* hath receiued the foode, it locks vp afterward, to heate & conuert it into a kind of white matter, which being so changed (according to his qualities) discends by degrees into the guts and bowels, certaine veines wherof doe sucke and draw the very purest & best substaunce, and so do cary it to the Liuer.

When it is grosse &